

SMALL BUSINESS MARKETING TIPS

Below are Marketing tips that will enhance your chance of attracting opportunities in this growing, competitive World of Business

I. Company Strengths

Know your market niche.

II. Focus on a few private and public sector agencies and companies that your company capabilities best compliment

A. Locate companies and agencies that need and buy your product or services. References available to assist you in your research are:

1. Government Purchasing and Sales Directory. This document alphabetically lists 4,000 products and services bought by the federal government's major military and civilian agencies and provides the specific purchasing offices who are responsible for purchasing the items. The document is available from the following office and website:

Superintendent of Documents
Government Printing Office
Washington, DC 20402
<http://www.gpo.gov>.
2. The Federal Procurement Report, published annually by the Federal Procurement Data Center, this report contains information on contracting activities of sixty federal agencies and provides information valuable for market and geographical analysis. It identifies the type of products and services procured by the agencies along with prime contractors who receive the majority of the federal contracts in each state. Contact the prime contractors regarding subcontracting opportunities. The document is available from GSA at the following address and website:

Federal Procurement Data Center
General Services Administration
7th and D Streets, SW
Washington, DC 20407
<http://fpds.gsa.gov>.

- B. Decide if you should focus on a particular industry, company size, etc.;
- C. Focus on companies and agencies that have similar customer experience (commercial or specific government agency); and;
- D. Ensure that the companies and agencies that you choose to market meet your long/short term goals.

III. Make maximum use of existing programs

- A. If you are not already on the General Service Administration's (GSA) Federal Supply Schedule (FSS), apply to get on the schedule since the Federal agencies' use of the schedule for purchases is increasing; (To keep current on FSS information, call GSA at (703) 305-5600 or access the homepage at <http://www.fss.gsa.gov>).
- B. Since the Federal government's use of credit cards is increasing both in volume and thresholds, make sure your firm accepts credit card purchases. The Federal Government charge card program is known as "GSA SMARTPAY". If your company already accepts charge cards, no additional steps are necessary. If not, contact a local bank or a GSA SMARTPAY contractor (American Express (800) 686-5493, Citibank (888) 241-1514, First National Bank of Chicago (312) 732-7828, NationsBank (800) 999-5189 ext. 7991, Mellon Bank (800) 424-3004, or U.S. Bank (202) 408-0101.) Information is also available from GSA at: <http://pub.fss.gsa.gov/services/gsa-smartpay>.
- C. Determine if you are eligible for participation in Federal procurement preference programs and take full advantage of the benefits (e.g.,) register on SBA's PRO-NET database of small businesses, become certified as a Section 8(a) firm, Small Disadvantaged Business (SDB), HUBZone business, etc., and become eligible for restricted competition contracts, non-competitive contracts, ten percent price preferences, etc. Federal agencies and prime contractors can access PRO-NET to find qualified small businesses. You can access PRO-NET at <http://www.pro-net.sba.gov>. To learn more about the program and to see if your business is located in a HUBZone, go to <http://www.sba.gov/hubzone> and enter your business address.
- D. In addition, you may wish to register on the Minority Business Development Agency's (MBDA) Phoenix Database which is a database of minority businesses. MBDA uses Phoenix with the Opportunities Database to match listed minority firms with contracts and other business opportunities via e-mail and fax. You can access Phoenix at http://www.mbda.gov/Phoenix/register_phoenix.html

- E. Seek out and gain benefits from small business organizations such as Small Business Development Centers, Minority Business Development Centers, Women-owned Business Development Centers, Native American Business Development Centers, trade associations, professional development seminars/workshops and other resources which offer an array of services. A current list of Development Centers and over 800 trade associations are listed on the HUD website at <http://www.hud.gov/cgi-bin/osdbu/osdbexec.pl>

IV. Learn and research the companies and agencies that you target

- A. If HUD is one of the agencies you have chosen to market, study HUD's web page at www.hud.gov.
- B. Review HUD's mission, program office accomplishments and updates.
- C. Identify potential direct contracting opportunities which are discussed at HUD's current, forecast and subcontracting opportunities web pages.
- D. Start with the following home page:

www.hud.gov/osdbu.html

www.hud.gov/cts/ctshome.html

- E. Identify potential contracting opportunities generated by HUD's grant and funding recipients which are discussed at HUD's grantees and funding web pages. The addresses are as follows:

www.hud.gov/fundopp.html

www.hud.gov/grantees.html

- F. READ! Trade magazines and business journals.

V. First impressions are lasting impressions

Project a professional image, from the first telephone call to your company capability statement.

VI. Locate the right people

- A. Discuss potential contracting opportunities with the small business, contracting and program office staff identified on HUD's website and on HUD's marketing contact list;
- B. Participate in events/meetings attended by your target audience;
- C. Attend trade fairs in your company discipline and meet with your targeted representatives; and;

VII. Capitalize on your past experience

- A. Elaborate on previous related experience;
- B. Mention any awards and recommendations from highly regarded sources that support the quality of your product or services; and;
- C. Emphasize unique capabilities that your company can provide and how your company would be a valuable asset to the HUD project and program office.

Hard work, Perseverance, and Quality Products and Services = Success